



IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

JANUARY 25, 1826.

Mr. Lloyd, from the Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the petition of certain merchants of Baltimore, praying that the present duty, of one dollar per quintal, on imported dried fish, may be repealed, and that a duty of fifteen cents per quintal may be imposed in lieu thereof,

REPORTED:

That the memorialists aver, the proposed reduction of duty would promote the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests of the country.

That the present duty operates as a prohibition of the importation of the articles from foreign countries.

That, by a recent act of Parliament, a market has been opened in the British North American colonies, for our foreign and domestic manufactures, to a great extent, and to secure the benefits of the new trade, as well as to extend the present one, in bread stuffs, we must enable these colonies to make payment in their products, of which dried fish is an important article; but the principal benefits, the memorialists state, they apprehend will result from the fact, that South America requires a particular kind of fish, which can be procured from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, but which cannot be obtained, except in small quantities, and of an inferior quality, from our own fisheries, owing to a different manner of curing, and to the colonists having the advantage of contiguity to the fishing grounds, and to the large permanent establishments they have on shore, to which the fish are carried, as soon as caught, and cured in a better manner than those of the United States, which must be transported to a greater distance.

In reference to which reasons, for the reduction of duties asked for, and the effect they believe would flow from acceding to it, the Committee remark:

That the fisheries on the coast, and on the banks of Newfoundland, were, from a very early period after the first settlement of the country, considered as objects of great national importance, and worthy of the particular attention both of the British and American Governments; as is evidenced by the numerous laws passed for their protection, and from the employment, antecedently to the Revolution, in the

State of Massachusetts alone, of twenty-eight thousand tons of shipping, and from four to five thousand seamen in this pursuit.

That a continued and active vigilance to guard against an interference from foreign participation, or competition, still marks the policy of the British Government, in reference to the fisheries, which she encourages by bounties, and fortifies by prohibitions, confiscations, and severe penalties.

The Government of the United States, also impressed with the importance of this interest, in a national point of view, immediately after it came into operation, imposed in July, 1789, a duty of fifty cents per quintal, on foreign caught and dried fish, imported into the United States, which, in 1804, was continued without drawback; and, being still found inadequate for the purpose intended, that of counter-vailing foreign importations; in April, 1816, the duty was raised to the present rate, of one dollar per quintal, on the same condition. The principal object of the imposition of this duty, the Committee confidently presumed, was the protection and support of the Bank and coast fisheries of the United States, which cannot but be considered an invaluable branch of the national resources; whether viewed in relation to the hardy, intrepid, and skilful seamen it produces, and who, in the hour of danger, have ever been found ready, promptly, to rally under the standard of their country, and to contribute a large proportion of those, who, in time of war, have manned the public and private armed vessels of the United States, and, in periods of peace, have furnished a prolific nursery and school for the most effective and useful seamen employed in its mercantile navigation; or whether considered in relation to one of the most important staples it creates for the commerce of the Northern and Eastern part of the Union; or the amount it adds to the national wealth, literally drawn from the depths of the sea; to the encouragement it affords to all classes connected with ship building; and to the drafts it makes upon the agricultural interest, for the subsistence of the seamen engaged in the fisheries, and that of their numerous families on shore, while absent themselves on their hardy and perilous occupation on the ocean.

That, from the protection given by the duties before mentioned, the fisheries have, in some degree, extended with the growth and expanding interests of the United States, will be apparent from the statements accompanying the present report; yet it will also be seen, that this increase has occurred in a very moderate degree, giving only an addition of one-tenth in nineteen years, and having, from 1823 to 1824, actually diminished more than 1000 tons; furnishing conclusive evidence, that the protection afforded is not more than sufficient to accomplish its object; for, although there is now a considerable tonnage, and eight or ten thousand seamen probably employed in this bold and laborious pursuit, in which the summer storm and winter tempest are fearlessly and cheerfully encountered; yet there is reason to believe, from the information of those most conversant with the fisheries, that it is an occupation of a very limited and restricted profit; an impression which is corroborated by the less improved situation of the fish-

ing towns than those of almost any other on the seaboard; from the small general increase of the tonnage engaged in them for the last eighteen years; from its actual and recent diminution; and from the memorial recently presented to the Senate, from the ancient town of Marblehead, one of the largest fishing towns in the Union, in which it is stated that, during that period, the number of vessels engaged in this, their principal employment, has decreased more than a fourth part, there having been, in 1807, 107, and now, only 80 vessels engaged in the fisheries from that port.

The Committee further remark, that it is undoubtedly true, that the British fishermen, from their proximity to the large establishments of Newfoundland, and to the shores of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the coast of Labrador, and the islands at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, all of them adjacent to the fishing grounds, have superior advantages in preparing their fish for market over the fishermen of the United States; but the existence of this advantage, the Committee apprehend, should form an additional, and, as they believe, powerful inducement, to continue, if not to extend, the protection given to our own fishermen, when coming into competition with those of a nation whose local positions give to it, already, superior advantages in this branch of business; and that, as it is to be presumed, for the supply of the South American markets, which, however, have been too recently opened to enable the Committee to form any definite opinion as to their extent or importance, for the article in question; fish may be cured, by the fishermen of the United States, in the manner that is wanted, although, at present, to be obtained but in small quantities; the dictate of national policy would seem to be, to endeavor, by additional inducements, to lead to the production of the quality and quantity required, rather than to lessen the incentives to it which at present exist.

And, the Committee take leave further to remark that, although Great Britain, wearied of her restrictive policy, when, perhaps, no longer necessary for her purposes, may have partially abandoned a system which she has cherished for ages, and of which her statesmen have, heretofore, for a long course of years, boasted, as a monument of her wisdom, and a material source of her commercial wealth and maritime greatness, and has opened certain enumerated ports in her colonies, and authorized a trade with them from the United States; the Committee are not aware, that, in time of peace, any great advantage is to be derived, to the commerce of the United States, from making British colonial ports places of entrepot, for the warehousing and transhipment of merchandise received from, or to be imported into, the United States, when it could, probably, be both brought and carried, without a resort to them, directly to its ultimate destination, with less cost, and greater benefit; more especially when such ports are subject to occlusion without their previous knowledge or concurrence, as is recently demonstrated to be the case with regard to Halifax, in Nova Scotia.

And the experiment, the Committee also conceive, yet remains to be made to ascertain how far the articles admitted, for colonial consumption, from the United States into the British colonies, at higher rates of duty imposed on their importation than when received from the mother country or the British possessions in America, and when burthened with an export duty which cannot be constitutionally countervailed, and other onerous colonial exactions, will admit of sufficient benefit to entitle the trade thus opened to be considered as meriting peculiar favor or indulgence, or one of great interest to the United States.

But, however this may be, no adequate inducement, as the Committee believe, exists, to give a premium on the industry of British fishermen, at the expense of those of the United States, by the comparatively free admission of the fish caught and cured by them into the ports of the United States, in depression and counteraction of the praiseworthy enterprize and exertions of a highly useful class of our own fellow-citizens; while a policy of this character is so far from being reciprocated on the part of Great Britain that, in all the acts of Parliament, which the Committee have at command, relative to the fisheries, or in which an incidental reference is had to them, foreign caught dried fish neither is nor has been at a trifling or heavy rate of duties, admitted into British ports; but has been, and still is, expressly and specifically prohibited from an entry, or admission, into the British dominions, on any terms whatever; and so strenuously is the prohibition enforced, that forfeiture immediately attaches to the importation; the vessel carrying it into port is also condemned; and any person evading the law, is, in addition to the loss of the property attempted to be landed, subject to a fine of an hundred pounds, and, in default of payment of the penalty, is to be committed to the common jail, there to remain twelve months, without bail or mainprize.

From all which considerations, the Committee are of opinion that the reduction of the duty asked for would materially injure a highly valuable interest of the United States, for a contingent and uncertain benefit, depressing an important auxiliary of our naval and mercantile marine, to the encouragement, in addition to the local advantages already possessed, of an alien, rival, and, under events which would not be unprecedented, a hostile competitor, and which the Committee consider is not called for by any principle of national comity or reciprocity; and, they therefore report,

That the prayer of the petition ought *not* to be granted.

JAMES LLOYD, *Chairman*
Per order:

*STATEMENT of the amount of Tonnage employed in the Cod Fisheries
from 1795 to 1824.*

YEARS.	Enrolled Tonnage.	Licensed Tonnage under 20 Tons.	TOTAL.
TONS AND 95ths.			
1795	24,887 06	6,046 05	30,933 11
1796	28,509 39	6,453 41	34,962 80
1797	33,406 67	7,222 31	40,629 03
1798	35,476 81	7,269 37	42,746 23
1799	23,932 26	6,046 17	29,978 44
1800	22,306 94	7,120 06	29,427 05
1801	31,279 57	8,101 85	39,381 47
1802	32,987 42	8,533 56	41,521 03
1803	43,416 20	8,394 24	51,810 44
1804	43,088 08	8,925 73	52,013 81
1805	48,479 30	8,986 37	57,465 67
1806	50,353 20	8,820 57	59,173 77
1807	60,689 88	9,616 20	70,306 13
1808	43,597 40	8,400 22	51,997 62
1809	26,109 67	8,376 93	34,486 65
1810	26,250 91	8,577 28	34,828 24
1811	34,360 85	8,872 76	43,173 66
1812	21,822 64	8,636 65	30,459 34
1813	11,255 36	8,622 13	19,877 49
1814	8,863 35	8,992 23	17,855 58
1815	26,510 33	10,427 26	36,937 59
1816	37,879 30	10,246 66	48,126 01
1817	53,990 26	10,816 79	64,807 10
1818	58,551 72	10,555 09	69,106 81
1819	65,044 92	11,031 34	76,076 31
1820	60,842 55	11,197 36	72,040 91
1821	51,351 49	10,941 89	62,293 43
1822	58,405 35	10,820 82	69,226 22
1823	67,626 14	11,213 63	78,839 77
1824	68,419	9,208 33	77,627 33

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Register's Office, January 4, 1826.

JOSEPH NOURSE, *Register.*

A STATEMENT exhibiting the quantity of dried and pickled Fish imported into the United States, from 1st October, 1804, to the 30th September, 1824.

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YEARS.					DRIED.	PICKLED.		
						Salmon.	Mackarel.	All other.
					Quintals.	Barrels.		
From the 1st of October, 1804, to the 30th September, 1805					106,543	4,681	8,956	11,613
Do.	do.	1805,	do.	1806	153,501	8,484	12,789	13,716
Do.	do.	1806,	do.	1807	233,902	7,231	16,098	17,057
Do.	do.	1807,	do.	1808	73,402	3,123	3,378	2,223
Do.	do.	1808,	do.	1809	8,446	927	4,019	3,083
Do.	do.	1809,	do.	1810	2,998	1,689	1,677	1,465
Do.	do.	1810,	do.	1811	5,685	3,257	-	1,104
Do.	do.	1811,	do.	1812	2,221	169	68	453
Do.	do.	1812,	do.	1813	10,100	723	77	1,533
Do.	do.	1813,	do.	1814	14,510	917	1,557	4,504
Do.	do.	1814,	do.	1815	16,401	1,195	1,435	2,971
Do.	do.	1815,	do.	1816	14,373	5,636	7,482	2,497
Do.	do.	1816,	do.	1817	4,610	4,403	5,346	2,874
Do.	do.	1817,	do.	1818	2,920	3,339	5,451	948
Do.	do.	1818,	do.	1819	1,037	1,467	6,865	417
Do.	do.	1819,	do.	1820	431	1,831	185	298
Do.	do.	1820,	do.	1821	346	1,048	7	116
Do.	do.	1821,	do.	1822	712	1,244	387	95
Do.	do.	1822,	do.	1823	2,969	1,507	67	268
Do.	do.	1823,	do.	1824	644	1,935	782	373

MEMORIAL OF THE MERCHANTS OF BALTIMORE.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The undersigned ask leave to represent, that, in their opinion, the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests of the country will be promoted by an alteration in the present duty on imported dried fish, and respectfully offer the following reasons:

The present duty of one dollar per quintal is equal to an ad valorem duty of fifty, and, in some cases, seventy-five per cent. and operates as an entire prohibition of the article. A recent act of Parliament has opened a market in the British North American colonies for our domestic and foreign manufactures to a great extent; and, to secure to us the benefit of this new trade, as well as to extend the present one in bread stuffs, we must enable those colonies to make payments in their products, of which dried fish is an important article.

But, the principal benefit, we apprehend, will result from the fact, that South America requires a particular kind of dried fish, which can be obtained from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, but which cannot be obtained except in small quantities, and of an inferior quality, from our own fisheries. The different manner of curing them constitutes the difference in British and American fish, and the colonists have the advantage of our fishermen in this respect by reason of their contiguity to the fishing grounds. They have large and permanent establishments for curing fish on shore, to which their fish are carried as soon as caught, lightly salted, and soon dried; while our fish are heavily salted and stowed in vessels, until a large quantity is taken, when they are carried on shore, at some convenient place, and cured by the vessels' crews; or are brought home for that purpose; and, being thus heavily salted for preservation, they will not bear the voyage to South America without injury, and are unsaleable when at market.

From these considerations, we are brought to the conclusion that a reduction of the duty to fifteen cents per quintal will subserve the interests of the country.

Baltimore, Nov. 18, 1825.

